

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair
Mike DiPietro
Paul Fontaine, Jr.
Mike Hurley
Kristin Sweeney
Andrew Van Hazinga

PLANNING OFFICE: Mike O'Hara

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m. in the Conference Room, Fitchburg Municipal Offices, 166 Boulder Drive.

It was noted that A.J. Tourigny who had submitted a letter of interest in being an Associate Planning Board member, was present. His appointment was being sent to the City Council.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the October 21st & October 18th were approved as written.
Minutes of the December 16th meeting was approved with some revisions.

ANR plans

None.

Minor Site Plan Review

94 Summer St., Valley Stream Rehabilitation, 600 sq. ft. addition

John Steele of Tryko Partners presented plan for an expanded lobby off the Summer Street front entrance of rehab center. Originally they had planned on an accessible ramp to the front door but grade change is too great. The front entrance is on Summer St. but most visitors use back entrance, off parking lot. The rear entrance has an existing accessible ramp, and H/C parking.

After local approvals, Valley Stream still has to get approval from Mass. DPH for the expansion. There will be no increase in the number of beds at the facility.

Motion made & seconded to approve minor site plan subject to obtaining any necessary waivers for handicapped access entrance. Vote 6-0 in favor.

50 Whalon St., minor revisions to approved site plan - medical office bldg.

Brian Marchetti & Pat McCarty, McCarty Engineering present.

Lot is on the other side of the access driveway from 26 Whalon St. A Site Plan for this parcel had originally been approved by the Board in January 2012, and a revision downsizing the building to 4,800 sq. ft. was approved in October 2012.

Since that time, Whalon II, LLC has acquired two adjoining parcels which created more room for building and parking. Now proposed is a two-story 12,800 sq. ft. medical/professional building with 43 parking spaces. There will also be an underground stormwater recharge under the parking area, as with 26 Whalon St. Both buildings owned by Dr. Watkins. Will be leased for medical / professional use – NOT retail.

Pat: There will need to be lots of hammering for excavation, but no blasting anticipated. They will submit floor plan & elevations to the Board when finished by architect. The building will be similar in appearance to 26 Whalon St.

The existing freestanding sign will be taken down and a new one installed, both buildings will share it.
Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to Approve modified site plan with conditions:

- Similar in appearance as on 26 Whalon St.
- Floor plan & elevations to be submitted for the Board's review & approval
- Similar conditions as Site Plan decision for 26 Whalon St.

Vote: 6-0 in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

DPW-Wastewater - Update on "Organics-to-Energy" Feasibility Study (anaerobic digestion), West WWTP
Item postponed at request of Wastewater Dept.

MRPC - Transportation issues - "Wachusett Station" Smart Growth Study

George Snow, transportation planner at MRPC, had handouts and gave synopsis of the findings of the Transportation portion of the Smart Growth Study. Discussion about the difficult access to the station for pedestrians & bikes, and the hindrance of development potential in the West Fitchburg area as long as the Princeton Rd. (Rt. 31) railroad underpass remained as is.

Bill Krikorian, revisit "Fairway Homes" project, Arn-How Farm Rd.

Bill Krikorian and Jamie Rheault, Whitman & Bingham present. He has developed several large scale projects in the Lowell area. He's interested in acquiring the Fairway Homes project from the current owner (Fanelli) and building the project. Wants to build units selling at \$125K. He's working with Coldwell-Banker, they think there's a market for units at that price point. Rather than the single-family detached originally proposed, he wants to build duplexes (1,000-1,300 sq. ft. per unit), similar to ones recently built in Shirley & Ayer. They would be marketed as condos but a buyer could buy both units and rent one out.

Q: Is the Special Permit still in effect? Yes, because the Board granted an extension to start work in the project by June 2013; the Permit Extension Act automatically added four years to that.

Q: Why duplexes?

1. No sprinklers would be req'd, that adds \$5K per unit. 2. High front-end cost. 3. Duplexes are more saleable.

Discussion about possibly reconfiguring roadway & placement of units if going with duplexes.

Cluster them around the first loop road and leave the remaining area as open space.

Board asked him to look at possibly reducing roadway width, provide visitor parking, reserve a playground area, and install sprinklers even if not required per Code, if Fire Prevention requests them.

Have some variety of building styles, perhaps some with single-level living.

Krikorian: Coldwell-Banker says buyers need an incentive (price) to lure buyers to Fitchburg. Price point must be \$125,000 to make project work.

Consensus: Board agreed this change in the project would be since it would be a major modification of the Special Permit, it would need a new notice & hearing.

Jamie & applicant will be back to Board if they decide to pursue project.

2 Gage Place, concept plan - student housing, Ed Deeley

No one present.

Proposed Nashua R. bikeway - Joel Kaddy

Councillor Kaddy presented the idea of establishing an urban bike trail connecting Gateway and Riverfront Parks. The path would go down Sheldon St. over Nockege St. to River St., pass in front of the Iver Johnson buildings and cross River St. & down broad St. to the old Rollstone St. bridge. He is hoping that the bridge could be certified as structurally safe and new decking installed. On the other side of the bridge the trail would continue down a grade through Rollstone Bank property on Broad St. and then through the FRA's parking lot to Putnam St.

He plans to submit Recreational Trails Grant application to Mass. DCR for the cost of the establishing the bike trail & repairing the bridge.

The Board agreed to submit a letter of support for the grant.

Lot release, 172 Tibbett Circle

This is the last vacant lot in Deloge Heights, Phase III. Records indicated that this lot had been included in previous lot releases, but the closing atty. requested one specifically for this lot.

The Board voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to sign the release, and it was signed.

The Board reviewed and approved a "common driveway agreement" as per condition of a recent Special Permit issued for a common driveway at 350 Alpine Rd. between Anderson and Kruse/Albert

Board Reorganization

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to designate Ms. Caron as Chair.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Van Hazinga) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to designate Mr. Fontaine as Vice-Chair.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Mr. Hurley stated he is interested in being appointed to the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee.

Next Tuesday's meeting (1/27) will be the CDBG public hearing. Mr. Van Hazinga and Mr. Fontaine will recuse themselves due to the appearance of a conflict of interest since they sit on the Board, or has a relative that sits on the Board, of two of the applicants for CDBG funds - the Twin Cities CDC and the Fitchburg Housing Authority, respectively.

Meeting adjourned: 9:20 p.m.

Next meeting: 1/27/15 (CDBG hearing only) *(Note: This meeting was postponed to 2/3/15)*
Minutes approved 2/17/15.